

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

LONDON BUREAU
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
c/o BBC MONITORING SERVICE
CAVERSHAM PARK, READING, BERKS.
RG4 8TZ

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21 October 1980
MLD-0055[]
Operations Group, FBIS

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Dear Jerry:

Subject: []

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My two-day visit [] last week came at a good time, after their move to new quarters but not so soon after that I would see nothing but chaos. Even so, there is still a lot of work to be done to finish the place and the lobby is still known as a hard hat area.

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Intendant [] are delighted with the new setup and well they might be. It's a very tall, modern office building, something like 35 stories high with a terrific view of the city. It will be expensive to run, [] is aware, and probably would not be planned today given the state of energy supplies. The elevators are extremely fast, which makes [] job of ferrying priority traffic down to the basement wireroom from the 23rd floor manageable for the moment, until the building's successor to the Lamson conveyer gets into operation. (Rather than using the proven technology of the pneumatic tube, the building's designers have installed an "electric railway" that will shunt pieces of paper back and forth through the building at what is hoped will be high speed. There is some doubt it will work properly but that remains to be seen.) Meanwhile, Clair says, his couriers work well for the routine traffic and he can handle the priority traffic himself. As you are aware, [] wants to give the centralized wireroom in the basement a chance to prove itself before he gives consideration to a separate wireroom for the Monitoring Service.

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[] is delighted with the support he is getting from [] and the two seem to get along quite cordially. Certainly [] is quite interested in the news business and seems very favorably disposed toward the monitoring service.

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[] brought up several points in the course of our conversation that are worth mentioning here. I am not sure how the affair of providing access to the TRENDS has been worked out, but [] states that [] is reading the TRENDS and that he, [] is getting hit from time to

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-2-

time by [] with questions dealing with TRENDS material. [] would like to at least read the TRENDS on an informal basis even if he is not allowed to be on distribution for it. [] could arrange this, with Headquarters approval. I told [] I would pass the question on, as I was not able to give him an answer.

On the question of monitoring West German TV, something which [] i.e. in any way that would have the Monitoring Service go to the broadcasting side [] which has the equipment, for assistance. [] said he would be prepared to buy the cassettes if we bought the monitoring equipment and would do the monitoring for us unofficially. Considering his limited manpower, I'm not sure how he could cope with such a project, but it may be worth discussing if you care to pursue it.

[] has noted that astoundingly for a broadcaster which beams its output to East Germany Deutschlandfunk does not subscribe to ADN. Nor does []. He will be talking later in the month to [] officials about closer cooperation between the two services and one thing he will suggest is that the two services jointly buy the ADN file. I mentioned this to the BBC, thinking that if it ever came about they might be able to take advantage of it somehow, but there is little enthusiasm on their part for anything like [] monitoring the service.

Back to television for a moment. [] building is very high and they will be putting some rather extensive antenna arrays on the roof. They hope to be able to pull in the East Berlin television audio direct, rather than through the RIAS, whose engineers occasionally pull the plug on the feed []. They will at least have a choice of a RIAS feed or direct reception, whichever is better. They also hope to pull in to East German FM or VHF signals.

What they can do now is get Dutch, Belgian, and French television, according to []. He showed me the Dutch and Belgian signals on his TV set and said he could also get French TV but that his set at the moment was misaligned. I had brought the subject up because of the current difficulties the BBC is having getting the West European TV survey off the ground in Belgium. I think if the Belgian company falls on its face it may be worth going [] for some help and have mentioned this to the BBC.

-3-

[] was interested in news on the circuit upgrading project and I gave him what news there was, i.e. that all the equipment had been ordered and that we would let him know as soon as possible when to go ahead and order the circuit and the terminal equipment at his end.

Another chapter in the [] affair may be about to unfold. [] said that it was hoped they would be given employee status [] by the end of the year. This would permit their use full-time instead of half-time and permit them to select copy. I gather that one of these two is in favor of the idea and the other is not.

It was my impression, in an admittedly short look at the operation, that [] monitoring service was decidedly shorthanded. The combination of liberal annual and sick leave [] employees plus leave for cures every two years means that staffing is fairly short most of the time. Perhaps with the new Intendant it will be possible to increase the T/O. Certainly some of the things that [] would like to do will require increased staff.

As you are now probably engaged in a search for [] successor, it might be good for me to reinforce what I think your feelings are about the need [] There is no doubt in my mind that a good grasp [] is a sine qua non for this job. Clair must go back to the text quite often to resolve his editorial dilemmas, and the easier the incumbent of this position is able to do it the better for us. And his dealings with the wireroom people in their new centralized configuration will be vastly eased if he has a command of the language. I certainly was glad, during this short visit, to have had some kind of command of the language, however rudimentary.

All in all a very profitable visit and very pleasant, thanks to the hospitality of all involved.

Best regards,

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Chief, London Bureau

cc: Chief []